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Schools**

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Of one high school in Mutasa District situated in
Rural Zimbabwe**

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SUBSTANCE ABUSE BY RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF ONE HIGH SCHOOL IN MUTASA DISTRICT SITUATED IN RURAL ZIMBABWE.

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International- Zimbabwe

Abstract

The study sought to identify how rural high school students are prone to substance abuse as compared to abuse by urban high school students. A research was conducted at a high school in rural areas. The target population was 1320 boys and girls at this high school. A sample of 132 boys and girls was selected. The study identified risk factors associated with substance abuse, the consequences of substance abuse by students at the high school in forms 1-6. The implications of the findings for a large rural high school are discussed. Recommendations are put forward and these were advocating for the execution of a protracted and comprehensive educational programme of substance abuse by students. Prevention and reduction measures are advocated for where the entire community actively participates.

Key words: *Alcohol, substance abuse, risk factors, tolerance, withdrawal, students.*

INTRODUCTION

The study of substance abuse for this high school was motivated by the desire to get insights on how rural school children possibly abuse substance, given the location and character of the high school. The school is actually one of the populous schools in Mutasa District and is one of the sixteen secondary schools in the District offering 'A' level studies. It has the highest catchment area of students in the district with a number of bottle stores in the vicinity of the school.

The researchers were keen to appreciate how the students were faring. Given the fact that most studies in the country on substances have focused on urban areas, the researchers were interested in understanding substance abuse in the rural areas with a view of recommending appropriate and effective social work response benefiting the situation.

Contextual Background to the Study:

World Health Organization (2001) cited alcohol as the leading cause of death for males between the ages 15-19. A survey conducted in Italy showed that 42% of Italian students aged 14-19 admitted to using drugs while 82% admitted to using alcoholic beverages (Awake Magazine, June 2004).

According to the US National Survey results on drug use, about half of all teenagers in the USA have tried illicit drug before finishing high school (Johnson and O' Malley, 1994). The US National Survey adds that: 'nearly four out of every five students (77%) have consumed alcohol, more than just a few sips by end of high school'. Clearly, substance abuse among youths of school going age is a social problem in western countries which are generally affluent. This is despite the fact that students are sanctioned against taking drugs or any habit forming substances (Emler and Reicher, 1995).

However, there is growing evidence that substance abuse is not only affecting affluent youths in the western world but also African high school students as well. Meursing and Morojele (1988) found the growing problems of substance abuse among high school students in Lesotho mainly in urban settings where some students were actually found to be regular drinkers and smokers while some were occasional abusers. Meursing and Morojele (1988) also found a significant relationship between family income and drinking of students whereby children of parents with skilled employment and presumably higher income drank most often. Osei-Hwedie and Ramakoho (2005) studied secondary school crime in Botswana and discovered that substance abuse was the main reason for involvement in criminal and delinquent acts by boys. The study also found that school friends increased chances of boys drinking alcohol and smoking.

The problem of substance abuse among African school youths appears to be propelled by various factors. According to Sandhn (1997), changes such as migration, urbanization and the consequent breakdown of traditional family systems are associated with negative behaviour among youths, one of which is substance abuse. Marital disharmony, child abuse, spoiling children with excess cash and general lack of parental guidance can also see children resorting to substance abuse.

Zimbabwean school children are also being affected by substance abuse in one way or the other and this is more evident in urban areas. In a 20th

July 2009 televised address to mark the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, with a theme 'Do drugs control your life and your community?' the Director of WHO – Zimbabwe raised concerns about substance abuse by children in elite schools. These children are said to be abusing histalix, cocaine, alcohol beverages and marijuana which could be a direct result of considerable amounts of pocket money they receive from their parents. The Director of WHO, however, lamented that in Zimbabwe, the problem is not well acknowledged as in West Africa.

A number of studies on substance abuse in Zimbabwe have a clear urban bias. For instance, a study by Mkuli, (1994) of street children in Greater Harare, mainly unearthed the sniffing of glue by street children as a growing problem. Studies by Moyo (1995) focus on drug abuse treatment for adults in residential area while another by Watadzaushe (1997) actually focuses on substance abuse at the workplace. Urban and Rural Zimbabwe has a number of night clubs and beer halls where young people could find it easier to access them. In addition, rural areas tend to promote traditional brews which may be difficult to prevent children from abusing since some of these brews are even used for cultural ceremonies which also tend to include children. While the government of Zimbabwe has the statutes like the Education Act and other Policy Instruments which aim to reduce and eliminate substance abuse among children under the age of 18, their usefulness or weaknesses is not well documented in rural areas. Clearly, the rural sphere is understudied, hence, this study intends to close that research gap.

The Concept of substance abuse

Understanding the conceptualisation of substance use and abuse was primarily important in helping the researchers to design the study and to discover explanations about substance abuse. Understanding the concepts also helped to understand how relevant social policies are created. According to Action (2001), substance abuse means taking too much of a drug too often, or taking the drug for the wrong reason. Substance use/abuse refers to use/abuse of addictive or habit forming drugs which can make a human body depend on the drug. By being addictive, most substances cause great damage to the body as they may force users to want more and more drugs especially when used for a long time e. g. alcohol and nicotine cause great damage to the body if used for a long time, whereas caffeine, which is found in tea and coffee, does not. School children need a lot of awareness as they get into the problem unaware.

According to Mosby (2002), substance abuse, also known as drug abuse, refers to a maladaptive pattern of use of substance that is not considered dependent. The term "drug abuse" does not exclude dependency, but is otherwise used in a similar manner in no medical contexts. Public health practitioners have attempted to look at drug abuse from a broader perspective than the individual, emphasizing the role of society, culture and availability. Rather than accepting the loaded terms, alcohol or drug abuse, many public health practitioners have adopted phrases such as 'substance and alcohol type problems' or 'harmful/problematic use' of drugs. The Health Officers Council of British Columbia in their 2005 policy discussion paper, 'A Public Health Approach to drug control in Canada', adopted a public health model of Psychoactive substance use that challenges the simplistic black – and white construction of the binary (or complementary) antonyms 'use' versus 'abuse'. This model explicitly recognizes a spectrum of use to dependence. In the modern medical profession, the two used Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the World Health Organization's International Statistical Classification of Diseases and related Health Problems (ICD), no longer recognize 'drug abuse' as a current medical diagnosis. Instead, DSM has adopted 'substance abuse' as a blanket term to include drug abuse and other things.

Depending on the actual compound, drug misuse, including alcohol, may lead to health, social, morbidity, injuries, unprotected sex, violence, deaths, motor vehicle accidents, homicides, physical dependence or addiction problems. In the USA, approximately 30% of suicides are related to alcohol abuse. Alcohol abuse is also associated with increased risks of committing criminal offences including child abuse, domestic violence, rapes, burglaries and assaults.

Substance abuse, including alcohol and preposition drugs can include symptoms which resemble mental illness. According to Anderson (1995), this can occur both in the intoxicated state and also during the withdrawal state. In some cases, these substances included psychiatric disorders, can persist long after detoxification; such as prolonged psychosis or depression after amphetamine or cocaine abuse. A protracted withdrawal syndrome can also occur with symptoms persisting for months after cessation of use. Benzodiazepines are the most notable drugs for inducing prolonged withdrawal effects with symptoms sometimes persisting for years after cessation of use. Abuse of hallucinogens can trigger delusional and other psychotic phenomena long after cessation of use and cannabis may trigger panic attacks during

intoxication and with prolonged abstinence. According to Eggert and Kumper (1997) even moderate alcohol sustained use may increase anxiety and depression levels in some individuals. In most cases, these drugs induced psychiatric disorders fade away with prolonged abstinence. Substance abuse has negative effects on the central nervous system (CNS) which produce changes in mood, levels of awareness or perceptions and sensations. Most of these drugs also alter systems other than the CNS. Some of these are often thought of as being abused. Some drugs appear to be more likely to lead to uncontrolled use than others.

However, drugs and alcohol theories do not always specify which area they seek to explain. Often by error of omission, they assume one theory explaining all substance abuse behaviors and consequences. This is problematic because it compromises our ability to more fully understand what we seek to explain and remedy. Part of this problem may stem from our society's strategy in addressing the drug problem. According to Johnson and O'Malley (1994), for more than 25 years, the USA has waged a punitive war on drugs that locates drug problems within the individual and targets zero tolerance of drug use. Thus, it has been interested in explaining any use of drugs because any use is deemed undesirable and problematic. What this means is that research, to a large extent, has focused on explaining any use, rather than distinguishing between use, abuse and tolerance, dependence and addiction as well.

There is also a notion posited in the gateway theory that use of illicit drugs leads to abuse of harder ones. Thus, researchers have assumed that explanations for the use of drugs will also be valid for the abuse of or addition to them. However, the smaller number of habitual users of harder drugs and multiple drugs require urgent and focused attention regardless of their ages. Various theories also tend to assume, by sin of omission, that the factors explaining drug use will also work to explain abuse and addiction. Even more problematic is that many theories used to explain drug use are more general theories of crime and deviance, thus, they do not theorize drug use or alcohol use or abuse as independent phenomena worthy of separate explanation. They consider it a form of deviance that can be explained and understood by a more general deviance theory. However, for the purpose of this study, terms such as substance use and substance abuse were sometimes used in combination for the simple reason that simply using habit forming substance is negative for persons under 18 years of age and that even if they exceed this age; they are prohibited if they are students. Use can also imply to set the precedent for future use which can potentially be abusive. Some

of the theories reviewed in the succeeding section also adopted the general deviance approach in understanding substance abuse.

THE ZIMBABWEAN SITUATION ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The Pre-colonial situation

Substance abuse has a long history in Zimbabwe. This has been a problem mostly among men and even among school children. According to a study by Chingono, Woelk, Fritz, Bassett and Todd (2001), the central role beer halls play, not simply as bars, but as community institutions, has an interesting social history rooted in the legacy of British colonial rule in Southern Africa. Chingono et al (2001) went on mention that early 20th century British authorities started a campaign to control the black African men's drinking practices. They noted that the British, who relied on cheap African labour to maintain lucrative mining and commercial farming enterprises in Southern Africa, were ostensibly concerned about over- drinking among men. They were also concerned about the large amounts of money female beer brewers made, as they produced and sold beer to the male workforce. As a solution to both perceived problems, the British government made petty brewing illegal and took over the beer brewing industry. British authorities also passed laws making it illegal for black Africans to consume 'European' liquor and relegated them to consuming the 'traditional' opaque beer produced by national breweries. In order to control the timing and amounts of beer by blacks, the British authorities also established beers halls. These were government owned and operated retail establishments where beer consumption was regulated. Substance abuse by in-school youths in Zimbabwe also dates back to the colonial period when white children of the settler community, who went to privileged 'A' class schools were the known key abusers. Hall and Mupedziswa (1995) actually observed that recruitment of probation officers around 1949 by the colonial administration was an acknowledgement of growing problems of juvenile delinquency in urban settings of which substance abuse was one of them.

The Post Independence Era

The urban bias of substance abuse by school children has continued even after independence in 1980. After independence many types of drinking venues in contemporary Zimbabwe emerged and these include nightclubs, bottle stores, sports bars and hotels. Sports bars and hotels

are venues patronized by wealthier Zimbabweans. In them, bottled 'clear' beer is sold along spirits of various kinds. Night clubs and bottle stores are more ubiquitous and attract crowds of mixed-socio economic status. Bottle stores are establishments where alcohol is sold but do not provide seating. According to Chingono et al (2001), alcohol bought at bottle stores is technically meant to be consumed elsewhere. However, it is common to find large groups of men 'hanging out' just outside the store drinking and socializing. In Harare, this activity (known as 'public drinking') is illegal but practiced nonetheless. In growth points, however, the ban on public drinking has been lifted, allowing crowds of men to gather on the side walk outside of the bottle stores. In the growth point that is used as a site of the study, the bottle stores played music and men crowded inside it to dance, despite the highly constrained space. Students from High Schools are also found mingling with adults in the dances as they admire it as well.

In March 2010, the Trends newspaper published a story at Conway College, a private institution, involved in peddling in hard drugs and drinking spirits by school children had become rife particularly by 'O' and 'A' level students. This is despite the policy mechanisms and institutions put in place by government and civil society organisations to curb the growth of substance abuse by youths and adults alike. For instance, the Education Act of 1987 clearly disallows students from taking alcoholic drinks or to be found drunk both within and outside the school premises, even if they are 18 years of age in the case of Advanced Level students. Teachers are also not allowed to be drunk while dispensing their duties. Unfortunately, these regulations may not be effectively enforced as some teachers may be drinking on the job and possibly do not report children who come drunk to school. According to the Liquor and Licensing Act, beer halls and other beer outlets are also prohibited from selling alcoholic beverages and cigarettes to children under the age of 18. This may not be enforced due to negative economic situation that has prevailed in the country for the past few years forcing traders to turn a blind eye on children buying alcohol and cigarettes.

The situation in rural areas is yet to be explored and understood before any effective intervention can be recommended. The illicit brews may be a problem in rural areas as it is brewed in homes without any control measures to prevent children and students from taking alcohol. Other possible risk factors include proximity of beer halls to schools, increased access to money by children, control mechanisms, put in place by school authorities, the community, the state, peer pressure, lack of role models,

and there may be also agents (human and non human) responsible for the increase in the occurrence of substance abuse among children. It is critical to try and grasp how rural school children are abusing substances and what dangers they could be exposed to. Room (1977) distinguished some of the possible effects of substance abuse. These challenges may be a living reality for rural school children abusing substances. Information showing effects of substance abuse like poor academic performance, irregular school attendance and other social consequences may not be well documented to influence the needed positive change in the children abusing substances, particularly in rural areas.

METHODOLOGY

Type of Research

A quantitative research method was used for this study.

Target Population

The target population was 1305 boys and girls at the time of the study though there was some ongoing enrolment of the lower sixth students hence the researchers agreed to work on an anticipatory school total enrolment of 1320 students.

Sampling Method

To ensure the generalisability of findings, the rule of the thumb was used to use a sample size of 132 (10%) from the total planned enrollment of 1320. The researchers managed to do the sampling process of classes to be studied with the assistance of the school Headmistress and her deputy. The sample studied consisted of 132 boys and girls with an age range of 11-20 from six classes from form one (1) up to six (6) selected using stratified and systematic random sampling techniques from forms one (1) up to form four (4), there are six classes per each class with letter names R; S; T; U; V; and W, while 'A' Level has just two classes, one for lower sixth and the other for upper sixth. Hence the High school has a total of 26 classes in all. Therefore all classes per form were randomly sampled to remain with just one class per form. For "A" Level classes, since they are two, it was a matter of systematically picking the number of required students from the class units available. Two focus group discussions were conducted.

Form 1	Class T (had 49 students)	23 were sampled for the study
Form 2	Class R(had 59 students)	23 were sampled for the study
Form 3	Class R(had 53 students)	23 were sampled for the study
Form 4	Class V (had 64 students)	25 were sampled for the study
Lower 6 th	Class (20 students)	10 were sampled for the study
Upper 6 th	Class (46 students)	22 were sampled for the study

Total number of participating students was 132

FINDINGS

Attitudes of the students towards the study:

Generally, students and teachers displayed some interest and cooperation towards the study while some, particularly older students, felt the study had not come to provide insights on their substance abuse knowledge and practices but a mere witch hunting exercise. As an illustration, one 'A' Level drinking student commented that 'its non of your business' when answering the question on sources of substances in the school and community. Teachers were however very willing to share their views such that about more than five agreed to be part of the study in key informant interviews besides the school head and deputy.

Demographic characteristics of the sample

Table 1: Participation by Age

Number	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	11-13 Years	27	20.5%
2	14-16 Years	51	38.6%
3	17-19 Years	51	38.6%
4	20+ Years	3	2.3%
Total		132	100%

Table 1 shows that the ages of pupils who participated ranged from 11 years to 20 years plus. Fifty-nine percent of the students were between 11 and 16 years of age while the remaining percentage was above 17 years of age of which 3 students accounting for 2 percent of the sample were above 20 years of age.

Religious Orientations and substance abuse

All students in the study acknowledged that they belonged to one or more of the major religions in the country namely Islam and Christianity. Surprisingly, none mentioned that they belonged to the traditional African religions despite a significant number (39%) concurring that traditional beer tasted better than bottle store beer and that a considerable part of the sample (14%) also agreed that they can accept beer if it is given at a traditional ceremony. Sixteen percent were unsure but indicated 'maybe'. It could be that most of the Christian churches appear to accept some traditional cultural practices their members may choose to follow. Anglican was by far the most dominant church, followed by Methodist, Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), and Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA). Apostolic churches are also prominent at the High School. Pentecostal churches like Family of God also had a good representation at the high school. Other churches with buildings in the neighbourhood of the High school like Jehovah's Witness were also part of the sample. Members of Islamic Churches were also represented.

The fact that at least 75% of the students in the sample reported not using substance use could be partly explained by their religious orientation. This seem to reflect a similar finding by Chingono et al (2001) which revealed that religion was one of the important factors in inhibiting and enabling reduction in alcohol use. From the study, most of the students who drank beer were Anglican and this could be attributed to the fact that this was the dominant church in the sample and probably that the church could have liberal doctrines regarding alcohol use such that one can drink but as long as they do not get drunk they committed no sin to God. However, the assumptions on the religious role cannot all be concluded with certainty unless other variables come into play. In any case, the frequency of attending church services were not established as these could help to show students level of commitment to church doctrine.

In any case religion is supposed to act as a control mechanism to prohibit the prevalence of vices in society like substance use. In the case of the High School, it was playing a role in a way if we look at the statistics from the sample that indicates that those not abusing alcohol were the majority by far. Religion, as a part of the societal control mechanism at the high school complimented in the school mechanism like guidance and counselling sessions and awareness raising activities that are often done by some children at school under the guise of Youths Education Through Sport, an initiative to raise awareness on HIV and AIDS and also quite a

number of other child led informations like FLAG and Justice for Children Trust with broader interest in child rights. School authorities also discipline those student caught abusing alcohol as a way of controlling the situation. The fact that there are some students abusing alcohol, though few, are still cause for concern since these indicate weaknesses in the current mechanisms. It is very clear from the study at the High School that parents and other community pupils may not be well involved in curbing substance abuse at the school.

Students living situations at home and at school

Over 50% of the students lived with parents but not necessarily with both parents since either one was deceased or they lived separately. The existence of one parent or double parent orphans at the high school could be explained by high incidence of HIV and AIDS in the country. Fifty-three percent (53%) lived with parents, and of that 53%, 30% lived with relatives, 12% with others while almost 11% lived in private or rented accommodations. Having 47% of students in the sample not living with their parents can be attributed to the fact that the high school has a very big catchment area of students since most come from wards and villages where only primary schools are available and so for secondary schools they would have to come and live near the high school while some content with long distances to the high school daily. There is no doubt from the results of the study that a scenario of not living with parents, anyhow, predisposed a number of students to the use of substances particularly alcohol and marijuana. Living with parents during school days was also found to be most common among younger students rather than the older groups which tended to live with others or in private or rented accommodation.

FAMILY INCOME

This was explored through a number of questions. Where income from mothers' jobs were concerned, 30% of their mothers were unemployed while 32% had income from unskilled jobs while 22% had income from skilled jobs and 16% of the students had their mothers deceased. When it came to income from fathers' jobs, 19% of their fathers unemployed, 16% of the fathers had skilled jobs but without income and 36% had fathers with income from skilled jobs, while 29% had their fathers deceased. This brought us to analyze income from guardians taking such orphaned children and those staying away from parents for one reason or another. It is important to note that 23% of the children's guardians had

no source of income while 25% of the children's guardians had income from unskilled jobs, with other 52% of the children's guardians had income from skilled jobs.

STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUBSTANCES

Boys talked about the good they get from alcohol than girls. Older students praised alcohol than younger students did. Evidently, the percentage of positive statements about alcohol was significantly higher (71%) among students who drank alcohol than among those who did not drink alcohol (29%). No influence of church orientation could be found on the attitude of students towards alcohol.

MOTIVE FOR DRINKING

Only 37.7% totally agreed that drinking motivates them as compared to 62.3% who disagreed to be motivated by drinking alcohol. This appeared to have been confirmed by focus group discussions. Twenty seven percent strongly disagreed while 29% disagreed and this was in contrast to 32% who strongly agreed while 12% agreed. However when both disagreeing measures were added, they exceeded those disagreeing by 13% which reflected the varied knowledge groups in the students population.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

When students were asked whether they thought all people of their age will all become drinkers, one day, a surprisingly 32% of the sample agreed while the remaining 68% disagreed. The figure in agreement interestingly exceeded those who had reported their use of substance almost twice, therefore telling a point on the future inclination of the students on substance use.

INFLUENCE ON PEERS AND FRIENDS

One of the most consistent and strongest findings is that peer use of alcohol and drugs increases the probability of substance use by youth (Kaplow 2002, Windle, 2000 and De La Rosa 2005). While this is an important etiological aspect, one must be careful not to assume casualty. From the findings, an overwhelming 83% of the sample reported that none of their friends drank, while only 17% said that most of their friends drank. With those smoking, 86% also said that none of their friends smoked whilst 14% noted that their friends smoked. This, in a way,

could actually be consistent with the low numbers that have reported to be using or abusing the two substances. However, FGDs clearly showed that using or abusing substances at the school is taking place mainly in the groups while a few also do so individually. This may then appear an under reporting where most want to disassociate themselves with friends that are known to be smoking or drinking since they may fear being implicated and the embarrassment it may cause. Eighty percent disagreed with the notion that the students who do not drink are boring while the remaining 20% agreed as if to identify themselves as drinkers or simply a clear indicator that they approve of peers who drank.

Substance Abuse by Students.

One important question in assessing students' substance abuse was premised on whether or not students would accept alcohol when it was offered in a number of situations. That question had an 11 item self efficacy scale which produces the following results as indicated in the table below.

TABLE 2

SITUATION	YES	NO	MAYBE
At a friend's house	10%	84%	6%
At a sporting event	13%	76%	11%
With an old brother or sister	13%	75%	12%
With boy or girl you are attracted to	14%	74%	12%
After school with friends	12%	79%	9%
At disco or dance	30%	67%	11%
At a part with older students	17%	69%	14%
When you are bored	12%	76%	12%
When you are really upset	8%	76%	16%
At a traditional ceremony	14%	68%	17%
On a public holiday	25%	64%	11%

The most comfortable situation where students would accept alcohol was a public holiday where 25% of the sampled indicated that they would accept alcohol on a public holiday while 64% made an affirmative 'no' with 11% being unsure and so indicated 'may be'. Of those agreeing that they would accept alcohol on public holidays, 3% were girls while the rest were boys mostly in older forms. The behaviour of those inclined to use or abuse alcohol on public holidays could be explained by the fact that public holidays can be festivities where parents' supervision

of their children may be relaxed as they will be in a jovial mood. One good example is the New Year holiday where people wait for the Eve to thank the creator that they have made it and so alcohol is most used as part of celebrating the festivities. It is possible that for drinking parents who would have bought beer for that festive, children can get unhindered access then. Hence it can also be said from the findings above that although no significant association between leisure boredom and substance use was found. Girls reported significantly higher leisure boredom than did boys.

DRINKING IN THE LAST MONTH (30 DAYS)

To understand the current or most recent drinking practices of students, self report measures inquired of students drinking experiences in the past month and findings were very revealing. Of those that appeared to be drinking currently as indicated in the results 5%) at least 2 of these could be new users given the fact that they came from the group that had used alcohol 1- 10 times in their life. Three percent of the students used alcohol 11-20 times in their lifetime and those who never drank were 92%.

TYPES OF ALCOHOL STUDENTS USED

Students admitted to have used all alcoholic substance in the categories given although numbers using a particular substance as compared to the other varied. Wine was the most popular drink used by students with 50% followed by Chibuku with 35% and also spirits with 15%. The popularity of wine could be associated with religious rites since a number acknowledged having used wine most in church and interestingly, the majority of girls who admitted using substances, indicated wine as what they had taken. Home brew and clear beer constituted 2% each. From focus group discussions, some drinks which some students could be calling wires are actually spirits. These were skippers, zed, and lavidzani, knock out, kenge and shasha whose very high alcohol content is very clear from the nicknames given. The school authorities actually lamented the prevalence of deaths in the surrounding community where some locals were said to have died due to complications arising from using some of these dangerous spirits especially lavidzani, kenge and shasha. From focus group discussions, such spirits were preferred because one would get drunk quickly. Other students in the focus groups also mentioned that a harmful substance like battery acid was being invariably used to make such alcohol spirits.

Hence students drinking these spirits were therefore at a sure risk of harming their health.

STUDENTS' SMOKING HABITS

From the studied sample only one student reported to have used cigarettes once, while 3 reported that they sometimes smoke (2%). About two percent clearly reported themselves as clear smokers while one reported themselves as being everyday users. A statistically significant 96% of the sample reported that they had not used cigarettes in their lifetime. Coincidentally, we had a similar total number of students that had smoked or could be smoking mbanje as those on cigars. What is fundamentally different is their frequency of taking these substances.

EFFECTS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE ON STUDENTS

The effects of substance abuse was not only restricted to meeting the disciplinary measures by school authorities. Other students not using substances suffered psychologically and this was apparent from the FGDs and also the open-ended questions in the questionnaire where they expressed dismay and depth of emotion with the prevailing situation. For instance, one girl remarked "They should stop it, they should be stopped". Others remarked, "Please help us stop this as it is getting out of hand, learning with someone who is drunk and under the influence of drugs, is boring". On a positive note, one 'A' level student remarked that "I realized it is bad and I quit". Interestingly some older students remarked "it is not bad when it is not school time". This reinforces weekend drinking acknowledged by school authorities and also what some students say that their colleagues come to school drunk or with substances.

SOURCES OF SUBSTANCES

By far the most popular sources as reported by students were Dzvinyu (50%) and Sarupinda business centres (40%), both in the region of 1 -2 km from the High School but located on different sides of the school. Other sources which contribute about 10% named include DC, Selborne Stores, Sakupwanya, Chiyadzwa, Mozambique and Watsomba which is about 10km from the school. This clearly shows that the catchment of the high school is indeed big and that in itself has provided a key factor for substance use or abuse by the few students as indicated by the sample

studied. Furthermore, FGDs revealed that most spirits and also mbanje were being easily bought from Mozambique for reselling. Interestingly, sources reported were not limited to business centres but also specific bottle stores and beer halls such as Chindondondo bottle store. Some individuals nicknamed as homeboys' were mainly reported as peddling mbanje and spirits. According to key informants in the school, police moved in to stop the brewing of local beer in the local community known as "Nipa" in the period 2007 -2008. This was a clear indicator of the fact that the sources of substances were flourishing in the community.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It is very clear from the findings that substance use is an issue at the High school. It basically indicates the necessity of increased prevention of alcohol drinking activities given the location of the high school. The sale of beer and other substances, especially marijuana and spirits like lawidzani, zed and shasha were said to be coming from Mozambique. The dollarization of the economy appeared to have increased access to substance abuse by students since much of these are costing from US\$0,50 cents to a dollar which is the basic money students with access to income can get at a particular time. The issue of income access helps to underline the importance of parents involvement in the prevention of activities.

The need for a parent's inclusive approach has been highlighted by an apparent relationship between the drinking habits of parents and children. From focus group discussions and key informants interviews, it was clear that some older brothers of students enable their young brothers to access mbanje, cigars, and beers and sometimes hang around with them openly at these drinking places around the high school. Because substance use and abuse has been a part of our culture for centuries, effective prevention and treatment programmes have been extremely challenging to create. Prevention and treatment are not a one size fits all strategy and need to be adapted and modified to face the new challenges facing society (Eggert and Kumper, 1997). Preventive action should therefore focus on improving students' knowledge base on substance issues especially alcohol related programmes. The emphasis of getting drunk and the notion that drinking in moderation is impossible seem to carry dangers for future drinking habits with a high risk of alcohol related problems. From clinical experience, it would appear that Zimbabwean adult drinkers quite commonly think along the same lines. Therefore prevention activities among the youths and adults might focus

on the importance and feasibility of drinking in moderate, responsible and non problematic fashion. Preventive action might aim at reducing availability of alcohol to pupils by conditioning the legal beer and cigar outlets to have stricter standards of selling their beer. The case of the high school is difficult given the fact that Dzvinu Shopping Centre is virtually on the door step of the school, making access quite easy when students flush some cash. The problems of students accessing beer using cash were also highlighted in the FGDs that "homeboys" who are basically unemployed youths in the area are in the habit of making easy money through selling all available substances to students with little fear of sanctions. In fact the self report questionnaire also confirmed their apparent role and even cited some of these by names as sources of beer, mbanje and cigarettes. They are said to sell spirits more than clear beer since it makes one drunk a bit faster than clear or opaque beer. Since these "home boys" roam around the school because there is no perimeter fence around, it is imperative that the school can work with parents to ensure the school has a perimeter fence which controls movement into and out of the school by children and other community members' alike, particularly "home boys". Access to substance by students can be reduced through working with law enforcement agents to arrest traders who flout the regulations not to sell alcohol substances to children. From the findings, it is clear that the Ministry of Health may need to disseminate Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material on alcohol related problems such that people can better appreciate the dangers of using substances.

Harmful effects of tobacco include heart and lung diseases, while alcohol abuse leads to severe social, medical and psychological problems. Cannabis abuse may induce a wide range of psychological symptoms, ranging from anxiety to psychotic states and also social and medical problems. It is therefore desirable that the use of these substances can be curtailed. While prevention would be the best strategy in combating substance abuse, identification and treatment of established cases is equally important.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from the study, it is very clear that at the high school, mainly boys have used substances at one point or the in their life and some could be very heavy drinkers or smokers as well. It is very apparent that some students at the High school use or abuse alcohol, mbanje and cigarettes which infuriate other students who do not. Key risk factors has primarily to do with the geographical set up of the high

school catchment area which has thriving beer outlets especially bottle stores and beer halls which promoted unhindered access. Family members particularly brothers of older students are known to allow them to drink in their company effectively preventing teachers from stopping them and moreover enabling them to buy from outlets as if it is theirs. This appears to have opened way for future access even when brothers are not available. Some of these pupils' brothers contributed to the notorious 'home boys' who were identified as one main source of mbanje and dangerous spirits from Mozambique particularly lawidzani, kenge and zed which range from 35-45 percent alcohol content.

Young people who persistently abuse substances often experience an array of problems including academic difficulties; health related problems (including mental health), poor peer relationships and involvement with the juvenile justice system. Additionally, there are consequences for family members, the community and the entire society. Students at the school have a general lack of know how of the problems associated with substance use or abuse and so there is real need for awareness campaigns, realizing on those issues so that younger students graduate from the school without tasting substances since quite a number appear to have indicated that one day they may become drinkers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from the study can help to structure an effective social work response to substance abuse or use by school children, not only on at the High school, but even other schools in the district in a number of ways. In view of the findings, we recommended the following:

1. There is need for a more community and family centered approach to prevent and stop substance abuse by the students at the school since the community has been noted as a major contributory factor of students substance use. There is need to raise awareness to the communities on the dangers of substance abuse by in-school youths.
2. One of the main reasons for possible ease of passage of substances in the school is the lack of a perimeter fence which help to limit students' conduct with community people called home boys who are alleged to pedal alcohol particularly the spirits and mbanje. Where it is possible, the school should erect them.
3. From the study, it is clear that there is a serious knowledge gap among students of the dangers of using alcohol, cigarettes and mbanje which appear to permeate all forms although it is more serious among the lower forms. This can be addressed by the

development of various IEC materials for use by students and teachers routinely especially for guidance and counseling sessions, provision of drama, song, posters and pamphlets showing the reality of substance use and abuse.

4. Teachers should also be responsible for social molding for students by not coming to work drunk or drinking whilst on duty as alleged by some students.
5. Despite the economic challenges that befell the country's economy forcing beer and cigarettes traders to turn a blind eye as to the ages of people buying their products, there is need for the police and local community to unite and protest or stop the sale of alcohol and cigarettes to school children by the traders.
6. While a number of programmes that discourage substance abuse directly or indirectly like YES (Youth Education through Sport), Bridge the Gap, JCT can still need to train more peer educators to help arrest the problem since a number of students are known to drink in groups.

These recommendations should not be taken as prescriptions but as guidelines to come up with policies to nab such behaviour whilst they are still in their bud. Students need guidance for their future as some are in need of guidance to be able to make their own decisions.

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